

FOREWORD BY GENERAL SIR WILLIAM SLIM

Had it not been for the work of the Indian Tea Association I doubt if I should now be in a position to write a foreword to this or to any other book, for without their labour on the last stages of the long grim retreat from Burma in 1942 few of the Burma Army would have reached India. In the succeeding years, while we slowly turned disaster into triumph, it was again I. T. A. labour that played a great part in building and maintaining our one vital road link with India. We could not have done what we did without them.

To raise, organize, direct, move and maintain so vast a labour force against every difficulty of climate and terrain was a magnificent achievement. It was only made possible by the high efficiency of the Calcutta Headquarters of the I. T. A., the unselfish co-operation of the whole Planter Community, and above all by the cheerful, steadfast courage and resource of those planters who came with their labour as the forward officers of the force. They had the complete confidence of their men, and this confidence alone made the operation possible. The labourers themselves showed a steadiness, industry, discipline and loyalty that evoked the admiration of all of us who dealt with them.

I am glad to have an opportunity to place on record what the Fourteenth Army—and its Commander—owed to their “Navvies”, the Indian Tea Association Labour.



November, 1947.

General.